IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) In a conveyor wherein stacks of food product are transported on a conveying surface and must be temporarily stopped, a mechanism comprising:

a control;

a lower stop in signal-communication with said control, said lower stop having a lower stack-engaging portion and a lift portion, said lift portion selectively actuatable by said control to elevate said lower stack-engaging portion to engage and stop a moving bottom surface of the stack and to lift said stack above said conveying surface; and

an upper stop in signal-communication with said control, said upper stop having an upper stack-engaging portion and a lowering portion, said lowering portion selectively actuatable by said control to lower said upper stack-engaging portion to engage and stop a moving ~~an~~ upper surface of said stack.

2. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 1, comprising a lost-motion connection between said lowering portion of said upper stack-engaging portion to accommodate stacks of varying heights.

3. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 2, wherein said upper stack-engaging portion engages said stack by force of the weight of said upper-engaging portion.

4. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 1, wherein said lift portion and said lowering portion are configured to act simultaneously.

5. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 1, wherein said lift portion and said lowering portion each comprise a pneumatic cylinder, said pneumatic cylinders being dual acting to both lift and lower said upper stack-engaging portion and said lower stack-engaging portion to engage and then release said stack.

6. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 1, wherein said upper stack-engaging portion comprises a disk having a flat bottom surface.

7. (Original) The mechanism according to claim 2, wherein said lowering portion comprises a pneumatic cylinder having an extending rod, and said lost-motion connection comprises an end cap fixed to said rod and a connection portion fixed to said upper stack-engaging portion, said connection portion having a space allowing limited free vertical movement of said end cap.

8. (Currently Amended) A conveyor system for laterally aligning stacks of food products, comprising:

a conveying surface receiving a stream of stacks sequentially in laterally spaced positions, said conveying surface conveying said stacks in longitudinal lanes;

two lower stops arranged laterally side-by-side beneath two adjacent longitudinal lanes, and each having a lower stack-engaging portion and a lift portion, said lift portion selectively actuatable to elevate said lower stack-engaging portion to engage a bottom surface of the stack and to lift said stack above said conveying surface; and

two upper stops arranged respectively above said two lower stops, and each having an upper stack-engaging portion and a lowering portion, said lowering portion selectively actuatable to lower said upper stack-engaging portion to engage an upper surface of said stack;

wherein when two side-by-side stacks are stopped by said two upper stops and said two lower stops, said two upper stops and said two lower stops are activated to transfer said stacks together longitudinally along said conveying surface.

9. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 8, comprising a lost-motion connection between said lowering portion of said upper stack-engaging portion to accommodate stacks of varying heights.

10. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 9, wherein said upper stack-engaging portion engages said stack by force of the weight of said upper-engaging portion.

11. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 8, wherein said lift portion and said lowering portion are configured to act simultaneously.

12. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 8, wherein said lift portion and said lowering portion each comprise a pneumatic cylinder, said pneumatic cylinders being dual acting to both lift and lower said upper stack-engaging portion and said lower stack-engaging portion to engage and then release said stack.

13. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 8, wherein said upper stack-engaging portion comprises a disk having a flat bottom surface.

14. (Original) The conveyor system according to claim 9, wherein said lowering portion comprises a pneumatic cylinder having an extending rod, and said lost-motion connection comprises an end cap fixed to said rod and a connection portion fixed to said upper stack-engaging portion, said connection portion having a space allowing limited free vertical movement of said end cap.

Please add the claims as follows:

15. (New) The mechanism according to claim 1, wherein at least one of said upper and lower stack-engaging portions comprises teeth to assist stopping of said stack.

16. (New) The system according to claim 8, wherein at least one of said upper and lower stack-engaging portions comprises teeth to assist stopping of said stack.

17. (New) In a conveyor wherein stacks of food product are transported on a conveying surface and must be temporarily stopped, a mechanism comprising:

a lower stop having a lower stack-engaging portion and a lift portion, said lift portion selectively actuatable to elevate said lower stack-engaging portion to engage and stop a bottom surface of the stack and to lift said stack above said conveying surface;

an upper stop having an upper stack-engaging portion and a lowering portion, said lowering portion selectively actuatable to lower said upper stack-engaging portion to engage an upper surface of said stack;

a lost-motion connection between said lowering portion of said upper stack-engaging portion to accommodate stacks of varying heights;

wherein said upper stack-engaging portion engages said stack by force of the weight of said upper-engaging portion.

18. (New) In a conveyor wherein stacks of food product are transported on a conveying surface and must be temporarily stopped, a mechanism comprising:

a lower stop having a lower stack-engaging portion and a lift portion, said lift portion selectively actuatable to elevate said lower stack-engaging portion to engage and stop a bottom surface of the stack and to lift said stack above said conveying surface;

an upper stop having an upper stack-engaging portion and a lowering portion, said lowering portion selectively actuatable to lower said upper stack-engaging portion to engage an upper surface of said stack;

a lost-motion connection between said lowering portion of said upper stack-engaging portion to accommodate stacks of varying heights;

wherein said lowering portion comprises a pneumatic cylinder having an extending rod, and said lost-motion connection comprises an end cap fixed to said rod and a connection portion fixed to said upper stack-engaging portion, said connection portion having a space allowing limited free vertical movement of said end cap.